lunching on green salad, and otherwise mortifying the flesh. Waistcoats were no more double-breasted; American slang was much in use, Negroes much sought after, beards grown on youthful chins, and two Woolworth's made to grow where only one grew before. Motor coaches penetrated to hitherto remote and inaccessible places, quite filling country-lanes; petrol-fumes mingled with spring and summer scents, and even rabbits became traffic-conscious, waiting their chance to cross from one burrow to another. Fields were neglected, tall thistles showing above the golden corn; farmhouses and cottages, cleared of farmers and labourers, acquired central-heating and garages, and put on a new prosperity, their occupants champions of preserving the countryside's amenities, though not its utilities, money being subscribed for this purpose, and tracts of country bought to prevent them from being built upon.

If the Preservation of Rural England was a cause which attracted adherents, and sometimes money, the Productivity of Rural England aroused little concern. The Ministry of Agriculture was the grave of the political expectations of its successive occupants.[25] Quotas and bounties and, later, marketing schemes would not make the soil increase its yield. Their harvest was largely pensionable officials, of these a fine crop. Even where tlie mainspring of urban prosperity had dried up, and towns were left derelict, like ports where the sea had receded, still their dwellers remained together, clinging to one another and to their corporate hopelessness. If they moved, it was to other towns;

to London, greatest of all. Silence and solitude were too like Eternity to be comfortable; and there was desolation where no trams ran. More returned from Canada, Australia and

[25] Both Mr. Walter Elliot and Mr. W. S. Morrison were regarded as lively, and set for rapid promotion, perhaps for the Premiership, until they were put in charge of Agriculture. Then their careers wilted, and would not afterwards be revived. General Bramwell Booth was in the habit of putting too energetic officers into what was called the 'freezer*—that is, sending them to remote and unexciting posts where their ardour would soon cool; the Ministry of Agriculture was Mr. Baldwin's 'freezer'.